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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001021

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [LA](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH SUPPORT EU PRESSURE ON LAOS

REF: A. SECSTATE 87274

[1](#)B. DUBLIN 597

Classified By: PolCouns Mary E. Daly Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) PolOff delivered Ref A demarche to Eric Verwaal, Head of the Southern Asia and Oceania Division, and Hein Copper, Laos Desk Officer. The GoNL maintains concern about the human rights situation in Laos, and is prepared to support EU action on ref A if the presidency puts forth a proposal. The Dutch will raise the issue with the Irish and confer further with EU members. Copper noted that it may be possible to have the local EU presidency embassy present concerns to the GoL on behalf of either the EU troika or the presidency. Copper noted that as the Netherlands maintains no presence in Laos, [1](#)B. the GoNL is not/not prepared to raise the issue bilaterally.

[1](#)2. (C) Verwaal stated that Germany and Sweden traditionally take a keen interest in Laos. Both have called for the EU to use ODA funds as a lever to improve the situation in Laos. Earlier this year the EU discussed a proposal to begin an EU-Laos human rights dialogue, but Verwaal anticipated that the GoL would possibly have difficulty with this idea. (Note: Verwaal was unsure if the proposal had been approved by EU members and communicated to the GoL.) The Netherlands supports this idea.

SOBEL